US ARMY CHAPLAIN CENTER AND SCHOOL

THE MILITARY CHAPLAIN AS A LEADER
IN DECISION-MAKING GROUPS

SUBCOURSE 85 WRITING SKILLS

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The military chaplain of today spends much of his time in groups. These include staff meetings, parish council meetings, clergy workshops, planning sessions, committee work, *and* human self-development programs, and many others. The chaplain's normal approach for dealing with people is based on a face-to-face conversation. Often times, the shift in perspective, from working with individuals to working with a group is difficult to make in actual practice. It is like a shift to a higher order of magnitude, which is not easy, when the lower order itself is complex, and by no means fully understood. But due to the lack of time both on the part of the chaplain and the serviceman who comes to see him, meeting in groups is practical and desirable. When is group decision-making preferable to that of the individual? Perhaps the following guidelines will help to determine which approach to use.

Group decision-making is more appropriate when: *This dichotomy is far too exact—rather simplistic*

    1) The problem is complex.

    2) High importance is attached to the matter.

    3) Member interest is high.

    4) Idea input is needed, as in brainstorming.

    5) Members are competent in the subject areas involved.

    6) Risks are moderate to moderately high.

    7) Pooled judgment is desired.

Individual decision-making is more appropriate when:

    1) The problem is relatively simple.

    2) The matter is of routine importance.

    3) Member interest is low.

    4) Idea input is not desired.

5) Members lack familiarity with the subject area.

6) Risks are very low or extremely high.

7) Simultaneous factors must be considered in making a judgment.

As with most things in life, there are advantages and disadvantages to groups. While the chaplain may look to groups as a way to a creative, integrated type of leadership and ministry, he often has to ask himself if groups are not simply a pooling of ignorance or an attempt to fill time when nothing has been prepared. Father Theodore Hesburgh, President of Notre Dame University, said recently that it may be very difficult for the historian to pin a label on our age. This is because our age is, in his opinion, the age of frustrated expectations, the age of protest against almost anything, the age of unlimited possibilities, and of dis-appointing results.

[handwritten margin note: Para begins with advant. + disadv. of groups + moves to unrelated issue of outrage of frustrated expectations. Prob with para structure]

Group programs have expanded rapidly in the last fifteen to twenty years. However, the research and evaluative efforts have lagged behind. Carkhuff, Gazd and Larsen conducted a comprehensive appraisal of groups. The main weakness found in the studies were:

[handwritten margin note: There has been extensive research however since 1968-69.]

[handwritten margin note under "years": 1969 1968]

a) Theoretical orientations were vague or poorly stated.

b) The nature of the group process was not clearly defined.

c) Qualifications of the group leader were not clearly identified.

d) Specific goals were not stated in precise, measurable terms.

e) Difficulty in obtaining adequate control groups.

The major contribution of Carkhuff's study, "Helping and Human Re-lations", is this emphasis on assessing the interpersonal functioning of each member as the group begins and then providing specific efforts to facilitate improved functioning.

For the chaplain or any of the military personnel to remain involved and interested in groups over a long period of time, they must receive rewards at a sufficient rate. The two kinds of rewards possible are: (a) gratification of individual needs for such things as friendship, dominance, intimacy with certain people, opportunity to test ideas, etc.; (b) satisfaction with group accomplishment of tasks. The reward of task accomplishment at the beginning will not be sufficiently great and frequent to avoid discouragement and maintain involvement. Since chaplains help to keep the morale high, their groups, by design, should be given a quasi-social character so that through informal conversations, hobbies, games, even parties, the participants can receive rewards over the rewards for work. Groups can be organized more effectively when friends are with friends, so that the initial hurdle of distrust can be overcome. Success depends upon the ability of the members to exchange ideas freely, and to feel involved in the decisions and process of the group.

The purpose of this paper is to present group process techniques helpful to the chaplain as a leader of a decision-making group. These techniques may be reviewed and used to maximize the dynamics which affect the chaplain's own style and to minimize the undesirable ones.

ASSETS TO BE MAXIMIZED:

1. Many heads are better than one. This is not to say that sheer numbers of people involved will guarantee a mathematically greater sum total of knowledge or expertise, especially if required training is necessary. When people get together they generate a character and existence of their own, growing into a mature working group or becoming infantile in their handling of their problems. A good leader tries to balance the three levels of needs for a group: (1) Individual needs; (2) Group task

level; (3) Group maintenance level. A brief description of each of these needs is desirable.

1) Individual Needs: Every individual brings to a group a particular set of needs which impinge upon the group and its task. It is at this level we are most apt to be found wanting, for individual needs are frequently well hidden behind the task drive of the group, or behind well-developed behavior patterns.

2) Group Task Level: Most groups have some task confronting them, and exist primarily to carry out that task. Frequently they are so conscious of the need to accomplish this task that they are unaware of the needs of the other two levels, namely the group maintenance level, and the individual level.

3) Group Maintenance Level: As people work together on a task in a group, they are also doing something with each other. Consequently a group consists of a constantly changing network of interactions and relationships. A group needs to have a growing awareness of itself as a group and to face the need of maintaining the relationships within it if the task is to be accomplished.

Good quote, but not sure it sums up this para.

> A man must be willing to let himself be known to himself
> and to others. He must express and explore his feelings and
> open up areas long dormant and possibly painful, with the
> faith that in the long run the pain will give way to a re-
> lease of vast potential for creativity and joy. This is an
> exhilarating and frightening prospect, one which is often
> accompanied by agony, but which usually leads to ecstasy.[1]

II. Group participation enhances acceptance of any decision. In every group situation, people are interacting with one another in many different ways. Participation can be described in terms of who is speaking to whom - and much speaking is being done - and by whom. Participation patterns tell something about the status of the group, and often

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[1]Schutz, William, _Joy_, (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1967) p. 158.

indicate how effectively the group is using the resources of its members.
The ability of the group to function properly does not depend on the
leader. The members of any group who are going to carry out decisions
made for the group, will assume participation appropriate to the task
and be responsible for the way the group acts. Any group can benefit
from a skilled leader, but to get a creative group thinking, or decision
from a group, or a group action, may require many roles from the leader,
and the group itself. Contributing to the total task of leadership is
a responsibility of each member. Bowers and Seashore propose that
leadership:

> may be provided by anyone in a work group for anyone
> else in that work group. In this sense leadership may be
> either "supervisory" or "mutual"; that is, a group's need
> for support may be provided by a formally designed
> leader, by the members for each other, or both; goals
> may be emphasized by the formal leader, by the members to
> each other, or both.[2]

III. Different perspectives for viewing the same problem is the
third advantage of a group discussion which should be maximized. One
person mulling over a problem for any length of time seems to get into a
rut. What he often needs is a fresh look at the problem by someone else.
That is precisely what a group can provide. Members are concerned with
contributing ideas, elaborating on and changing the ideas of others, ex-
pressing opinions, teasting the feasibility of potential decisions. In a
group there is likely to be at least one thinker who may approach the
subject with zeal and who may open the door to a new solution or a faster
solution. Appropriate and various procedures will help the group get the
task done.

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[2] Bowers and Seashore, "Predicting organizational effectiveness with a
four-factor theory of leadership", Administrative Science Quarterly
11 1966, p. 249.

[handwritten top right: again, good quote but not directly appropriate to section]

> What was really needed was a fundamental change in our at-
> titude toward life. We had to learn ourselves and, furthermore, we
> had to teach the despairing men, that it did not really matter what
> we expected from life, but rather what life expected from us. We
> needed to stop asking about the meaning of life, and instead to
> think of ourselves as those who were being questioned by life - -
> daily and hourly. Our answer must consist, not in talk and medita-
> tion, but in right action and in right conduct. Life ultimately
> means taking the responsibility to find the right answer to its
> problems and to fulfill the tasks which it constantly sets for each
> individual.[3]

Goals are destinations. They are the "not yet" place we want to be. Goals

are new things, and like all new things, tend to be risky. Goals place an or-

ganization in its cultural environment. Even informal bull sessions have in-

formal goals. Since goals are the places we want to be, they generate commit-

ment, and commitment is power. Goals function to develop power and are es-

sential to the technology of managing human beings. Achievable goals are

usually long range and need sub-goals or objectives to define the short range

movement toward the goal. Objectives are the identifiable components which go

into achievement goals. They are measurable and specific. Once goals and

objectives are established, plans of action can be developed to achieve the ob-

jectives. Program design is a method of managing human beings. The effective

leader must check the elasticity and validity of the goals.

DANGERS ~~TO BE PROTECTED AGAINST~~: *[handwritten: better? Dangers with in the Group Process?]*

1. Social pressure and desire to be agreeable at times inhibits honest

discussion. There is a danger that not all ideas will be surfaced, that dif-

ferent points of view will not be voiced due to a desire to reach a consensus.

In a desire to reach a consensus the chaplain must not allow social pressure or

rank to silence any discussion which deserves a fair hearing.

2. The "Band-Wagon" effect. It often happens that the first one or two

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[3]Frankl, V.E., From Death-Camp to Existentialism, (Beacon Press, Beacon Hill,
Boston, 1959) p. 77.

in a discussion sets the tone, especially if they are articulate, or if they have gripes. A smart operator can plant a supporter or two in the group who will second any motion and call for a vote without any discussion. Here it is very necessary to ask for a differing point of view. The only matters on which people will expend energy are those about which they feel strongly and which they feel necessitate discussion.

3. Then there is the "loud-mouth" or the person who dominates a discussion. The person wants more than his share of influence on the discussion and therefore is defeating the purpose of the group discussion. Group pressure frequently can be brought to bear to give someone else a chance. Here the chaplain has to be careful; he may feel he has a message to deliver and will dominate the group. If he is the leader, it may be better for him to see himself as a moderator, keeping the discussion going and (ensuring that no one's *is that possible? or desirable.* feelings are hurt) while refraining from interjecting his own opinions.

A final danger to be avoided in the group process is allowing the discussion to develop into an argument, whereby the goal becomes winning a point rather than finding the best all-around decision. Individuals take great pride in the alternative views they present, and then spend the rest of the discussion defending their views. Instead of allowing the creative process to fully develop, individuals begin to challenge each others' contribution before they have *Pass on methodology?* a chance to think of the idea presented. Use of a flip board or blackboard helps to avoid this danger. As ideas are mentioned, it can be very helpful to have them written in view of everyone without giving credit to the authors. Subgroups often form on the basis of friendship, because of a common need or interest, and sometimes their antipathy or opposition can alter the direction of the group. Such groups can greatly influence the group's effectiveness.

While many chaplains find themselves leaders of different groups, they also wrestle with their own patterns of behavior in the whole group decision-making process. One chaplain may see himself as a "ram-rod" decision maker.

He believes in the incompatibility of a good decision and reacts after hours of discussion by making all of the decisions himself. He trusts only his own assessments of the facts. When he must work with a group, he pushes his own opinions strongly. He is so aware of his final responsibility that he is compelled to force or impose his will on others. This open or subtle use of power and authority will determine success in getting his ideas accepted. The understanding of a good meeting is one in which he is able to get everyone else to go along with his views. This type of leader only understands a "win-lose" situation.

Of course there is the "contented-cow" decision maker. This is the person who believes in the incompatibility of a good decision and involvement of a group, but opts to keep the troops happy as being the value to be preferred. He believes it is more important to keep harmony in the group than to come up with the best possible solution. As a result he seeks agreement at all costs. His goal in the group process is the reduction of conflict in favor of cooperation. At times this approach seems to be based on a strong desire for fair play, trust, and peace, while often it is really a fear of one's own views or one's ability to deal constructively with conflict in the group. As a result it often leads to conformity with the loss of openness to innovation because a person mistrusts his own ideas or fears discourse. One's own judgment is distorted due to social pressure of keeping peace within the group. Where conflict threatens to erupt, he will interject humor, call for a coffee break, or otherwise distract from what he considers a possible failure.

There is also the "cop-out" decision maker. This leader believes in the incompatibility of a high quality decision and the satisfaction of the group. His way of reacting to such a choice is to stop being a leader. He abdicates his responsibility for either the completion of the job or the satisfaction of others. In a word, he gives up the struggle to reconcile the two. He may

lose interest in the group, and let his leadership sour gradually without even
realizing it.

Now we come to the person who is most convinced of the incompatibility of
decision and cooperation. This is the "tongue-in-cheek" decision maker. This
leader basically wants a quality decision, wanta a job well done, but trades a
little of the·top to get enough commitment from the group so that they will ac-
cept his views. This type of decision maker has a strong appeal because of his
adherence to majority rule. He is convinced that if a majority is brought to
reach a decision, even if he has to modify it a little, this will insure success.
The troops will be happy. And so he spends much of his energy gaining support
for his point of view rather than facing valid issues and differences. The
trouble with this leader is that he is willing to modify his position often in
order to gain agreement. These modifications are made with tongue-in-cheek, not
because he believes in the greater good results, but because of a compromise be-
tween opposing factors. The shame too often is the time wasted at the expense
of the good which could be accomplished.

The final type of decision maker is the "creative" decision maker. This
leader believes that the way to get the highest quality is though the group
process and the conflict it entails. He sees the involvement by the group mem-
bers leading to a greater level of commitment on their part and also greater
resources in tackling problems and arriving at creative solutions. It is a be-
lief in the creative potential of the group as opposed to the need for pacifica-
tion of its members.

This type of decision maker is aware of his own responsibilities, his limi-
tations, his strengths, and honestly tries to broaden and clarify his views of
a subject by adding those of others. He does not fear differences of opinion,
he welcomes conflict as breeding new ideas. He seeks to combine the disciplined
knowledge of interpersonal relationships with a frank and constructive approach

to opposing views. So he seeks to expand his ideas by soliciting points of
view, reasons, arguments, contributions of others. This type of group experi-
ence makes it possible for each one involved to look to himself and to the
others in the group.

Special training and qualifications beyond that of a creative leader, are
vital for a knowledge of group process. The skills, techniques and topics ap-
propriate to each group should be clearly understood. Good discussion tech-
niques and creative teaching can indeed make the imparting of information easier
and more meaningful.

LEADERSHIP:

The concept of leadership is by no means a clear one. Individuals who pos-
sess qualities that are superior to those of their peers may be considered to be
leaders simply because they possess these qualities. Because a chaplain has
social skills demanded of a public speaker, such as poise, confidence, good
voice, rich vocabulary, gestures, these do not make him a good leader. These
skills will help to pave the way socially to gain a hearing and to demonstrate
to the listeners that the speaker knows the rules of the game.

> "To lead, you must know your soldiers, yourself, and
> your profession."[4]

The ability to respond accurately to another's experience begins with the ability
to respond accurately to one's own experience. In addition, it is not simply
enough to respond to what is present in a person's experience; the effective
leader also responds to what is missing, but necessary in a person's experience.
The effective leader will act upon the value judgments nourishing the forces
of life and growth whenever and wherever he finds them.

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[4]Meyer, General Edward C., "Leadership: Return to Basics" <u>Military Review</u>,
July 1980, Vol. LX No. 7, p. 8.

The leader who chooses to ignore the soldier's search for individual growth may reap a bitter fruit of disillusionment, discontent and listlessness. If we, instead, reach out to touch each soldier - to meet the needs and assist in working together towards the goal of becoming a "whole person" - we will have bridged the essential needs of the individual to find not only the means of coming together into an effective unit, but the means of "holding together".[5]

It is obvious that the ability to lead is not necessarily something that we can consciously learn. Many good leaders cannot explain the reason for their successes. There are a number of ways a chaplain can assist members of this group with decision-making problems. The most obvious method is by setting a good example. He can instill cooperation by being cooperative, patience by being patient. He can ask himself if he can show himself in a way that the group will perceive as trustworthy and helpful. This helping relationship will provide opportunities for further assistance with problems of human relationships within the group. It is the quality of the interpersonal encounter with the client which is the most significant element in determining effectiveness.

Communication with self (intrapersonal) and communication with others (interpersonal) cannot occur outside of a social context. What we think about and the vocabulary we use in talking, is determined by our past interpersonal associations with others. A good leader must first attempt to understand himself, and then must master the basic social skills surrounding communication events in his culture. Any communication must be closely associated with a useful and realistic perception of the self. Effectiveness as a leader will depend in no small degree upon self-image, the extent to which others accept that image, and the interaction of the self-image with the image others have. Our self-knowledge is the total of the things we feel about ourselves, through interaction with others. To arrive at a knowledge of oneself is not easy.

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[5]Meyer, General Edward C., op. cit., p 9.

As I study, as deeply as I am able, the recorded clinical cases which have been so revealing of personal dynamics, I find what seems to me to be a very significant thing. I find that the urge for a greater degree of independence, the desire for a self-determined integration, the tendency to strive, even through much pain, toward a socialized maturity, is as strong as - no, is stronger than - the desire for comfortable dependence, the need to rely upon external authority for assurance. . . Clinically I find it to be true that though an individual may remain dependent because he has always been so, or may drift into dependence without realizing what he is doing, or may temporarily wish to be dependent because his situation appears desperate, I have yet to find the individual who, when he examines his situation deeply, and feels that he perceives it clearly, deliberately chooses dependence, deliberately chooses to have the integrated direction of himself undertaken by another. When all the elements are clearly perceived, the balance seems invariably in the direction of the painful but ultimately rewarding path of self-actualization or growth.[6]

Each one of us has lived with ourself a long time but do we really know the real me? The typical person has never made a serious self-inventory. If such an inventory were made questions such as these should be included: (1) Is there more than one me? (2) Are there realities beyond my realities? (3) What do I know of my background? (4) What do I know of my goals and purposes for being in the Army? (5) Am I realistic about my abilities, limitations? (6) What kind of role do I play as a chaplain? A leader with a good self-concept will develop a positive attitude. He will view life as a direction and not a destination. This positive attitude is best developed by (a) understanding self (self-inventory), (b) developing a helping relationship with others (promoting growth and fulfillment in others), and (c) believing in the goals agreed upon by the group.

William Meissner in his book, "The Assault on Authority" defines leadership as a form of the exercise of social power. It is a quality or form of social action by which the leader elicits the cooperation of individuals in a common objective, and successfully coordinates their activities in achieving the objective. One is a leader when one elicits cooperation and coordinates activities. The leader is an enabler, a facilitator, a synthesizer, a coordinator.

[6]Rodgers, Carl R. "Divergent trends in the methods of improving adjustment." Harvard Educational Review, 1948, p. 218.

My assumption is that leadership is an art. There are skills and tools of leadership but, in the end, the application of the skill is an art. Leadership may be compared to a ballerina, sculptor, painter, musician; to become a skillful artist takes years and years of development and practice. The basic tools must be perfected to a degree that they become integrated into the very art.

> Realizing in this day and age that even within a healthy organization the individual leader must establish somewhat independently his own credibility, the portrayal of competence has never been more important. Leaders have to know their job and show it.[7]

How then is the chaplain as a leader to demonstrate his competence and credibility within the military structure? The first and most basic task of the chaplain will be to lead his people out of the land of confusion into the land of hope. As he finds himself in decision-making groups at all levels of the command, he will have the courage to be an explorer of the new territory of self and to articulate his discoveries as a service to the young men and women he ministers to. When statements such as the following are made, "You say what I wanted to say, you bring to the front what was in my mind", "you say who we are, you recognize our condition" - then the chaplain can be happy. When a listening person is able to say that, then a deep human encounter has begun, and the ground is broken to receive the message, and no leader has to worry that it will not bear fruit.

The chaplain as a leader will stand in the midst of his people with utmost visibility if he is a person of compassion. Compassion is born when we discover in the center of our own existence, not only that God is God, but that man is man, and that our neighbor in uniform is our fellowman. This compassion is authoritative because it does not tolerate in-groups, or cliques, but breaks

[7]Ulmer, General Walter F. Notes on "Leadership for the 1980's" Military Review, July 1980, Vol. LX, No. 7, p. 12.

through the boundaries between languages, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, male and female, and pulls away the fearful mask so that beauty can be seen in every human face. The chaplain's task will be to bring out the best in the soldier and to lead him forward to be a whole person in society.

By way of conclusion, whether the chaplain finds himself in a group because he wants to, or because he has to, he will find that the group decision-making process c onnotes a creative method by which individuals are able to evaluate changes in themselves, in their environment, and make new choices, decisions, new judgments in harmony with life's goals and values. Since world conditions change rapidly, and the soldier is in a state of change, it is essential that he develop a balance between inner and outer forces. *Last portion of this sentence is unclear — and last sentence of essay certainly should — in some way — deal with the overall subject (The mil. Ch. as a Ldr in Dec. making Groups.)*

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